

# Social Services, Except Child-Care

(SIC 83, except 835)

## SIGNIFICANT POINTS

- Social services, except child-care, ranks among the fastest growing industries.
- About 2 out of 3 jobs are in professional, technical, and service occupations.
- Human service workers and assistants—the ninth fastest growing occupation—are concentrated in social services.
- Average earnings are low because of the large number of part-time and low-paying service jobs.

### Nature of the Industry

Careers in social services appeal to persons with a strong desire to make lives better and easier for others. Workers in this industry usually are good communicators and enjoy interacting with people. Social services workers assist the homeless, housebound, and infirm to cope with circumstances of daily living; counsel troubled and emotionally disturbed individuals; train or retrain the unemployed or underemployed; care for the elderly, and physically and mentally disabled; help the needy obtain financial assistance; and solicit contributions for various social services organizations. About 102,000 establishments in the private sector provided social services in 1998. Thousands of other establishments, mainly in State and local government, provided many additional social services. For information about government social services, see the *Career Guide* statements on Federal Government, and State and local government, excluding education and hospitals.

Social services contain four segments—individual and family services, residential care, job training and vocational rehabilitation services, and miscellaneous social services. (The child-care services industry, including day care and preschool care centers, is covered in a separate *Career Guide* statement.)

*Individual and family social services* establishments provide counseling and welfare services including refugee, disaster, and temporary relief services. Government offices distribute welfare aid, rent supplements, and food stamps. Some agencies provide adult day care, home-delivered meals, and home health and personal care services. Other services concentrate on children, such as big brother and sister organizations, youth centers, and adoption services. Workers in crisis centers may focus on individual, marriage, child, or family counseling.

*Residential care* facilities provide around-the-clock social and personal care to children, the elderly, and others who have limited ability to care for themselves. Workers care for residents of alcohol and drug rehabilitation centers, group homes, and halfway houses. Nursing and medical care, however, is not the main focus of establishments providing residential care, as it is in nursing or personal care facilities (see the statement on health services, elsewhere in the *Career Guide*).

*Job training and related services* establishments train the unemployed, underemployed, disabled, and others with job

market disadvantages. Vocational specialists and counselors work with clients to overcome deficient education, job skills, or experience. Often industrial psychologists or career counselors will assess the job skills of a client and, working with both the employer and the client, decide whether the client would be better served by taking additional job training, by being placed in a different job with his or her current skills, or by restructuring the job to accommodate any skill deficiency.

*Miscellaneous social services* include many different kinds of establishments, such as advocacy groups, antipoverty boards, community development groups, and health and welfare councils. Many miscellaneous social services organizations are concerned with community improvement and social change. They may solicit contributions, administer appropriations, and allocate funds among other agencies engaged in social welfare services.

### Working Conditions

Some social services establishments—such as residential care facilities—operate around the clock. Thus evening, weekend, and holiday work is not uncommon. Some establishments may be understaffed, resulting in large caseloads for each worker. Jobs in voluntary, nonprofit agencies often are part time.

Some workers spend a substantial amount of time traveling within the local area. For example, home health and personal care aides routinely visit clients in their homes; social workers and human service workers and assistants also may make home visits. In 1997, the incidence rate for occupational injury and illness in social services varied by industry sector. Compared to the rate of 7.1 per 100 full-time workers for the entire private sector, residential care and job training and related services had higher rates—9.9 and 9.7, respectively. On the other hand, individual and family services and miscellaneous social services had lower than average rates—4.7 and 3.8, respectively.

### Employment

Social services provided about 2 million nongovernment wage and salary jobs in 1998. Almost half were in individual and miscellaneous social services (table 1). An estimated 52,000 self-employed persons also worked in the industry.

**Table 1. Employment of nongovernment wage and salary workers in social services by detailed industry, 1998**

Industry	1998		1998-2008 Percent change
	Number	Percent	
Total .....	2,039	100.0	41.1
Individual and miscellaneous social services .....	923	45.3	32.5
Residential care .....	747	36.6	56.8
Job training and related services .....	369	18.1	31.0

In 1997, about 65 percent of social services establishments employed fewer than 10 workers; however, larger establishments accounted for most jobs (chart).

Social services workers are somewhat older than workers in other industries (table 2). About 39 percent were 45 years old or older, compared to 34 percent of all workers. Jobs in social services are concentrated in large States with heavily populated urban areas, such as New York and California.

**Table 2. Percent distribution of employment in social services by age group, 1998**

Age group	Social services	All industries
Total .....	100.0	100.0
16-24 .....	12.2	14.9
25-34 .....	24.3	23.9
35-44 .....	24.8	27.5
45-54 .....	21.8	21.0
55-64 .....	11.9	9.8
65 and older .....	5.1	2.9

### Occupations in the Industry

More than one-third of nongovernment social service jobs are in professional and technical occupations (table 3). *Social workers* counsel and assess the needs of clients, refer them to

the appropriate sources of help, and monitor their progress. They may specialize in child welfare and family services, mental health, medical social work, school social work, community organization activities, or clinical social work. *Human service workers and assistants* serve in a variety of social and human service delivery settings. Job titles and duties of these workers vary, but they include social service assistant, case management aide, social work assistant, residential counselor, alcoholism or drug abuse counselor, mental health aide, child abuse worker, community outreach worker, and gerontology aide. *Counselors* help people evaluate their interests and abilities and advise and assist them with personal and social problems.

About 3 out of 10 nongovernment jobs in social services are in service occupations. *Residential counselors* develop and coordinate non-medical activities for residents of long-term care and treatment facilities, such as assisted-living housing for the elderly. The social services industry employs over 4 out of 5 residential counselors. *Home health and personal care aides* help elderly, disabled, and ill persons live in their own homes instead of an institution. Although some are employed by public or private agencies, many are self-employed. Persons in *food preparation and service occupations* serve residents at social services institutions. *Nursing and psychiatric aides* help care for physically or mentally ill, injured, disabled, or infirm individuals.

As in most industries, administrative support workers—secretaries and bookkeepers, for example—as well as executives and managers account for many jobs. However, social services employ a much smaller percentage of precision production, craft, and repair, and of marketing and sales jobs, than the economy as a whole.

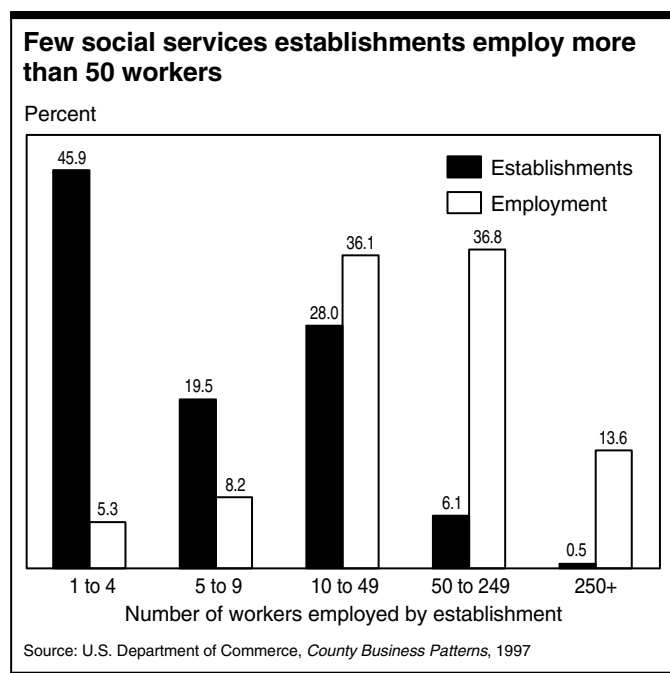
Certain occupations are more heavily concentrated in some segments of the industry than in others. Individual and miscellaneous social services, for example, employ the greatest numbers of social workers, human service workers and assistants, and home health and personal care aides. Job training and vocational rehabilitation services provide the most jobs for adult education teachers. Nursing and psychiatric aides and food preparation and service workers work mainly in the residential care segment of the industry.

### Training and Advancement

Some occupations in social services have very specific entrance requirements. These include most of the professional specialty occupations. Those requiring specific clinical training, such as clinical social workers and psychologists also require appropriate State licensure or certification. Nevertheless, people with a limited background in social services or little education beyond high school can find a job in the industry. Nursing aides and home health and personal care aides are two such occupations. Many establishments provide on-the-job or classroom training, especially for those with limited background or training.

Many employers prefer human service workers and assistants with some related work experience or college courses in human services, social work, or one of the social or behavioral sciences. Other employers prefer a 4-year college degree. A number of employers provide in-service training, such as seminars and workshops.

Entry-level jobs for social workers require a bachelor's degree in social work or in an undergraduate major such as



psychology or sociology. However, most agencies require a master's degree in social work or a closely related field. Public agencies and private practice clinics that offer clinical or consultative services require an advanced degree in clinical social work; supervisory, administrative, and staff training positions usually require at least a master's degree.

**Table 3. Employment of nongovernment wage and salary workers in social services by occupation, 1998 and projected change, 1998-2008**

(Employment in thousands)

Occupation	1998 Employment		1998-2008 Percent change
	Number	Percent	
<b>All occupations</b> .....	2,039	100.0	41.1
<b>Professional specialty</b> .....	684	33.6	49.7
Social workers .....	156	7.6	37.6
Residential counselors .....	154	7.5	54.1
Human service workers and assistants .....	130	6.4	73.4
Adult and vocational education teachers .....	49	2.4	43.6
Registered nurses .....	31	1.5	41.0
Counselors .....	28	1.4	43.9
Recreation workers .....	25	1.2	31.9
Teachers, preschool .....	22	1.1	36.4
<b>Service</b> .....	620	30.4	41.8
Home health and personal care aides .....	246	12.1	46.0
Nursing aides and psychiatric aides ...	109	5.4	44.4
Janitors and cleaners, including maids and housekeeping cleaners .....	63	3.1	31.3
Child care workers .....	51	2.5	54.7
Cooks, institution or cafeteria .....	28	1.4	37.0
Food preparation workers .....	23	1.1	26.6
<b>Administrative support, including clerical</b> .....	252	12.3	26.6
Secretaries .....	50	2.5	12.3
General office clerks .....	40	2.0	39.1
Receptionists and information clerks .....	30	1.5	41.1
Teacher assistants .....	28	1.4	39.1
Office and administrative support supervisors and managers .....	27	1.3	34.6
Bookkeeping, accounting, and auditing clerks .....	26	1.3	14.9
<b>Executive, administrative, and managerial</b> .....	251	12.3	35.8
General managers and top executives .....	81	4.0	37.9
Management support occupations .....	46	2.3	38.2
Administrative services managers ....	20	1.0	33.0
<b>Operators, fabricators, and laborers</b> ...	91	4.5	30.1
Motor vehicle operators .....	37	1.8	32.2
Hand workers, including assemblers and fabricators .....	30	1.5	32.3
<b>Technicians and related support</b> .....	58	2.9	45.4
Licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses ...	24	1.2	42.3
<b>Precision production, craft, and repair</b> .....	47	2.3	35.8
Maintenance repairers, general utility .....	21	1.0	35.9
<b>Marketing and sales</b> .....	27	1.3	31.5
<b>All other occupations</b> .....	10	0.5	40.6

Volunteering with a student, religious, or charitable organization is a good way for persons to test their interest in social services, and may provide an advantage when applying for jobs in this industry.

Advancement paths vary. For example, some home health and personal care aides get additional training and become licensed practical nurses. Formal education—usually a bachelor's or master's degree in counseling, rehabilitation, social work, or a related field—almost always is necessary for human service workers and assistants to advance. Social workers can advance to supervisor, program manager, assistant director, or executive director of an agency or department. They also may enter private practice and provide psychotherapeutic counseling and other services on a contract basis. Private practice for social workers depends on the affordability of services, including the availability of funding from third parties.

## Earnings

Earnings in selected occupations in the four components of the social services, except child care, industry in 1997 appear in table 4. As in most industries, professionals and managers—whose salaries reflect higher education levels, broader experience, and greater responsibility—commonly earn more than other workers in social services.

**Table 4. Median hourly earnings of the largest occupations in social services, except child care, 1997**

Occupation	Individual and family services	Job training and related services	Residential care	Social services, not elsewhere classified	All industries
General managers and top executives .....	\$19.08	\$22.11	\$18.55	\$22.69	\$26.05
Social workers, except medical and psychiatric .....	12.13	11.37	12.05	12.03	14.01
Secretaries, except legal and medical .....	9.39	9.51	9.64	10.27	11.00
Human services workers .....	9.45	8.60	8.12	9.72	9.89
Social workers, medical and psychiatric .....	13.09	—	12.32	—	14.72
Residential counselors .....	8.41	8.73	8.63	—	8.57
Nursing aides, orderlies, and attendants .....	7.17	—	7.20	—	7.76
Home health aides .....	7.17	—	7.23	—	7.75
Personal and home care aides .....	6.99	7.29	7.20	—	6.96
Child care workers .....	6.98	—	7.55	—	6.48

About 10.9 percent of workers in the social services industry were union members or were covered by union contracts in 1998, compared to about 15.4 percent of workers throughout private industry.

## Outlook

Job opportunities in social services should be numerous through the year 2008. The number of nongovernment wage

and salary jobs is expected to increase 41 percent, compared to only 15 percent for all industries combined. Expected growth rates for the various segments of the industry range from 31 percent in job training and vocational rehabilitation services to 57 percent in residential care over the 1998-2008 period (table 1). In addition to employment growth, many job openings will stem from the need to replace workers who transfer to other occupations or stop working. The greatest number of job openings should arise in large occupations with easy entry, relatively low pay, and high turnover, such as home health and personal care aides.

The expected rapid growth is due to expanding services for the elderly, the mentally and physically disabled, and families in crisis. Older people comprise a rapidly expanding segment of the population and are more likely to need social services than younger age groups. A continuing influx of foreign-born nationals to this country will spur demand for social services, such as relocation, financial, and job training assistance. Businesses are implementing more employee counseling programs. Programs also are increasing for child protective services and special groups, such as adults who were abused as children. The growing emphasis on providing home care services rather than more costly nursing home or hospital care, and on earlier and better integration of the disabled into society also will contribute to employment growth in the social services industry.

Some of the fastest growing occupations in the Nation are concentrated in social services. The number of home health and personal care aides within social services is projected to grow 46 percent by 2008, and human service

workers and assistants, 73 percent, compared to the industry average of 41 percent.

### Sources of Additional Information

For additional information about careers in social work, write to:

- National Association of Social Workers, 750 First St. NE., Suite 700, Washington, DC 20002.

For information on programs and careers in human services, contact:

- Council for Standards in Human Services Education, Northern Essex Community College, 100 Elliott Way, Haverhill, MA 01830

State employment service offices may also be able to provide information on job opportunities in social services.

Information on many occupations in social services, including the following, may be found in the 2000-01 *Occupational Outlook Handbook*:

- Adult education teachers
- Counselors
- Home health and personal care aides
- Nursing and psychiatric aides
- Recreation workers
- Human service workers and assistants
- Social workers